

1797
*The Principles of the REVOLUTION asserted
and vindicated, and its Advantages stated,*

IN A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT

Castle-Hedingham, Essex,

On the *FIFTH* of NOVEMBER, 1788;

Being the Completion of an Hundred Years since that
glorious Event.

By ROBERT STEVENSON.

With some Additions and Illustrations.

Forſan et hæc olim meminiffe juvabit.

Virgil.

L O N D O N:

Printed for C. DILLY, in the POULTRY;

M.DCC.LXXXVIII.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL
LONDON

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE Author of the following Discourse presents it with much deference before the public eye. It was drawn up with no other design than that of being delivered to his own flock; and, at their request, it now appears in a more permanent form. Being friends themselves to the principles of the Revolution, and rejoicing in the benefits of it, they wish to instil these sentiments into the breasts of their posterity. This Discourse being particularly intended for the young, the Author has made some few additions, which appear in the form of notes, and others in the body of the Discourse itself, which could not so properly have been delivered from the pulpit, but which, he hopes, will elucidate the subject, and engage the attention of younger minds.

ADVERTISING

[illegible]

To the Congregation of Protestant Dissenters in
Castle-Hedingham, Essex :

YOU have certainly the first claim, my beloved friends, to this Discourse, which was composed solely with a view to your improvement. So memorable an æra, as the hundredth anniversary of the glorious Revolution, I could not let slip without leading your minds to a view of the great advantages we all enjoy from it ; and endeavouring more firmly to impress upon you those manly principles which animated our Ancestors, and will, I hope, descend, from father to son, to the latest generation.

Far other subjects than the present have been the delightful and constant themes of my ministry among you,—the blessings, the privileges, the liberties, and the laws, of *another* kingdom !—a kingdom, which rises in dignity and grandeur infinitely above the most perfect state of any earthly one. And it is no common joy which fills my mind, when I reflect, that the great Monarch of this kingdom has been pleased so to honor his own sacred institutions among us, that the number of his loyal subjects has been increased, and the souls of his faithful friends edified and comforted.

Fourteen years, spent in your service, have been by far the most pleasant part of my life ; and every increasing year has brought with it some new proofs of your affectionate attachment, and some fresh displays of God's glorious grace.

From

From these considerations, you cannot but be much endeared to me ; and, whilst I chearfully give this public testimony of the sincerity of my affection for you, I look forward with triumph to that glorious day, when, I trust, I shall rejoice with many of you in the kingdom of our Father : for, what is my hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ?

I am your affectionate friend and pastor,

ROBERT STEVENSON.

*Castle-Hedingham,
November 28, 1788.*

PSALM

P S A L M lxxv. 7.

GOD IS THE JUDGE : HE PUTTETH DOWN ONE,
AND SETTETH UP ANOTHER.

IF ever there was one nation, more than another, which appears to have been the charge of the God of Providence, surely we of this happy island have reason to rejoice in our being thus distinguished. On this day, set apart for joy and gratitude, we commemorate three most astonishing deliverances, which were wrought out on the behalf of our religion, our liberties, and our country.

This year it is exactly two hundred years ago since the destruction of the *Spanish armada*, a most formidable fleet, sent out by Philip II. of Spain, in hopes of conquering this kingdom, and then of introducing Popery. It was not all the brave efforts, which our forefathers made to resist, it that alone produced the victory: this praise is due to him who has ever been the divine Guardian of his people. By his blessing upon the bravery of the British fleet, together with a dreadful storm at sea, many of the ships of the enemy were sunk, and the few that remained retired to Spain in great disorder. Thus may we, on this occasion, apply the words

words of Moses, *Thou didst blow with thy wind; the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.* Exodus xv. 10. This deliverance happened in the year 1588, and ought still to be recollected by us with the most lively emotions of gratitude.

The Legislature of this kingdom has also appointed this day to be observed in grateful thanksgivings to divine Providence on account of another great deliverance which King James I. his Queen, the Prince of Wales, and the two houses of Parliament, received from the Powder-plot, by which it was intended that they should all have been blown up on the 5th of November, 1605, which is exactly 183 years ago this day. Every person, who is at all acquainted with this great deliverance, will see the reason we have to commemorate this day with the most ardent returns of praise to our divine Protector.

But there is another important event which renders this day peculiarly illustrious, equal at least, and perhaps in its happy effects superior, to either of the former. It was on this day, the 5th of November, 1688, exactly one hundred years since, that the Prince of Orange, afterwards King William III. landed at Torbay, in the county of Devon, as the instrument in the hand of Providence of accomplishing the glorious Revolution, by which our religion and our liberties have been established upon a basis, which, I trust, will remain immoveable from generation to generation. On this occasion, the words of our text were fully verified when one king was deposed and another was raised up to sit on his throne: thus did it appear that

God

God is the judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

As I have designed this to be the subject of the present discourse, I shall request your attention to the following considerations:

It will be proper, in the first place, to state the grievances, under which our ancestors laboured, in the reign of James II. which made a revolution desirable.

We shall, in the next place, point out the methods by which, under Providence, the Revolution was effected.

We shall consider, thirdly, the advantages which our forefathers derived from it, and which we, at this present day, enjoy.

We shall then lead you to those useful lessons which we may learn from this event.

I. We are to state those grievances under which our ancestors laboured, in the reign of James II. which made a revolution desirable.

WHOEVER sits down and reads with attention this short reign, will see that, from the time of his ascending the throne, to his inglorious abdication of it, there prevailed one continued system of bigotry, cruelty, and oppression. The following representation of facts will set this in a clear light.

1. This Prince was hardly seated on his throne, before he gave sufficient indications of his designs upon the liberties of his people. The doctrines of *passive obedience and non-resistance* he ordered to be every where proclaimed throughout the kingdom.

This was a language too plain to be misinterpreted, and it clearly conveyed to the minds of the
 B people

people this idea, that whatever was the King's pleasure must be universally obeyed, though diametrically opposite to the liberties, the laws, and the religion, of his subjects. This is a doctrine which no man, who deserves the name of a man, can hear of without reprobation and branding with eternal infamy. What! are we, like so many slaves, or so many beasts of burden, to be subject to the whims and caprices of one man? — Against this degrading thought our ancestors rose with just indignation; they boldly asserted their freedom, and testified that nobleness of spirit, and ardent love of liberty, which they have transmitted to us as our richest inheritance.

2. Another thing, under which the nation was very much oppressed, was the revival of the *Court of High Commission*.

“ Among all the engines of authority formerly employed by the crown, none had been more dangerous, or even destructive to liberty, than the *Court of High Commission*; which, together with the *Star-Chamber*, had been abolished in the reign of Charles I. by act of parliament, in which a clause was inserted, *prohibiting, in all future times, the erection of that court, or any of a like nature*. But the law was deemed by James no obstacle, and an ecclesiastical commission was again issued, by which seven commissioners were invested with full and unlimited authority over the whole Church of England. On this court were bestowed the same inquisitorial powers possessed by the former court of High Commission. They might even proceed against any of the King's subjects upon *bare suspicion*; and, the better to set the law at defiance, it was expressly inserted in their
patent

patent itself, that they were to exercise their jurisdiction, notwithstanding any law or statute to the contrary."† When the King thus openly acted in direct violation of the laws, no person could be safe, especially as every one was liable to be brought before this court, only upon *bare* suspicion. A more sensible blow could not be given, both to national liberty and religion.

3. A third grievance, which was most highly and deservedly obnoxious to every manly and noble spirit among our forefathers, was the power which the King openly professed to dispense with the laws as he pleased,

For this purpose he took care to send for the Judges, one by one, and talk with them privately in his closet, in order to persuade them to declare for his dispensing power; telling them, he would have twelve Judges of his opinion. Four absolutely refused to comply, and were displaced. The King appointed four others, of more pliable and submissive understandings. A case in point was produced, and Sir Edward Herbert, then Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, upon the issue, declared, *that there was nothing whatever, with which the King, as supreme lawgiver, might not dispense.* This decision was confirmed by eleven out of the twelve Judges. It was also asserted that the laws of England were the *King's laws*,‡ and that therefore he might do

B 2

with

† Hume's Hist. of Eng. vol. viii. p. 247.

‡ The laws of England are not the king's laws. He has neither the power of making them, or of repealing them when made. This power the constitution has intrusted to the three branches of the legislature, the king, lords, and commons; and nothing can be law in England if either of those branches refuse their assent to any bill.

with them as he pleased. When these were the opinions of the King, and of those servile Judges, who only echoed back his mandates, what possible security could his subjects have, either for their properties, their liberties, their religion, or their lives?

4. The cruelties which he exercised, under *Jeffries* and *Kirk*, were another just ground of complaint against him.

Jeffries, who was Lord Chief Justice, and a man of a fierce and unrelenting temper, was sent down into the West of England to try the rebels in Monmouth's rebellion. Upon his suite Colonel *Kirk* was ordered to attend, with a body of troops, to keep the people in awe. It was not possible for James to find, in the whole kingdom, two men more destitute of religion, honour, and humanity. They were two cruel and merciless tigers that delighted in blood, of which the instances I shall here adduce will be very convincing proofs.

Kirk, upon his first entrance into Bridgewater, hanged nineteen, without the least enquiry into the merits of their cause. As if to make sport with death, he ordered a certain number to be executed, while he and his company should drink the King's health; and, observing their feet to shake in the agonies of death, he cried that he would give them music for their dancing, and immediately commanded the drums to beat, and the trumpets to sound.

One story, commonly told of *Kirk*, is memorable in the history of human treachery and barbarity,
and

and shews him to have been a monster of wickedness.*

Under such a commander, no good could be expected from the soldiery; and, accordingly, we are told, they were let loose to live on free quarter; and his own regiment, instructed by his example, and encouraged by his exhortations, distinguished themselves in a more particular manner by their outrages. By way of pleasantry, he used to call them *his lambs*, an appellation which was long remembered with horror in the West of England.†

But even the inhumanities of *Kirk* were exceeded by the violence of *Jeffries*, who compelled juries to condemn the prisoners that were brought before him, though against their consciences.‡ Five hundred
were

* The story above alluded to, which could not with delicacy have been mentioned in the delivery, is thus related in the words of an elegant historian. "A beautiful young maiden, bathed in tears, threw herself at the feet of *Kirk*, and pleaded for the life of her brother. The brutal tyrant, inflamed with desire, but not softened into pity, promised to grant her request provided she would yield to his wishes. She reluctantly complied with the cruel request, without reflecting that the wretch who could make it was unworthy of credit or confidence. But she had soon reason to know it. After passing the night with him, the wanton and perfidious savage shewed her in the morning, from the bed-room window, that beloved brother, for whom she had sacrificed her innocence, hanging on a gibbet which he had secretly ordered to be erected for the purpose! — Rage, indignation, and despair, took at once possession of her soul, and deprived her for ever of her senses!"

† Hume's History.

‡ A specimen of the persecuting spirit of this unjust judge may be seen in his treatment of Mr. Baxter at his trial. — See the Nonconformist's Memorial, by Mr. S. Palmer, vol. ii. page 533.

This

were condemned by this unjust Judge: of these, two hundred and fifty were executed, the rest were transported or otherwise severely punished.

All these cruelties *James* approved of; for, he had an account of them sent to him every day, and the King took pleasure to relate them, in the drawing-room, to foreign ministers; and, at his table, to his servile dependents, calling it *Jeffries's* campaign. Nothing could more shew the King's desire of taking the odium of those severe executions upon himself than his rewarding the inhumanity of *Jeffries* with a peerage and the office of chancellor. When *Kirk* was charged with these cruelties, he said, that *Jeffries* and himself had acted far short of the King's instructions.

5. The unlawful and arbitrary attempt to bring in Popery, was another of the wrongs which the nation

This great man, Mr. Richard Baxter, was eminently a burning and shining light, one of the most illustrious models for zeal, for energy, and for usefulness, that a young minister can form himself by: and, perhaps, there has not been one man, since the age of the Apostles, whose usefulness has been so extensive both in his ministry and in his writings; and it is asserted, upon good grounds, that, at Kidderminster, the happy effects of his ardent concern for the best interests of men are still to be seen in the descendants of those who had been his hearers.

It was with much pleasure the author of this discourse read the following testimony (to which he joins his most cordial assent) to the character of this great man, in the pious Mr. Newton's *Cardiphonia*. "Mr. Baxter" (says he) "appears to me, notwithstanding some mistakes, to have been one of the greatest men of his age; and, perhaps, in fervor, spirituality, and success, more than equal, both as a minister and a Christian, to some twenty, taken together, of those who affect to despise him in the present day."

tion suffered under this gloomy and bigoted monarch.

James, upon his coming to the crown, in a speech which he delivered to the privy-council, and which was printed and dispersed all over the kingdom, said, that he would make it his endeavour to preserve the government, in church and state, as it was by law established; but, instead of this, he made it his endeavour to subvert and overturn both. By the power which he assumed, he dispensed with the Test-act,* which was made to keep out Roman Catholics from offices in the state. In consequence of which, numbers of that communion were introduced, both into the army and at court; and even Protestants were deprived of their places, without any reason given, to make room for Papists. He also attempted to introduce Roman Catholics into the Church and into the two Universities.

Determined

* The test and corporation acts, which are still in full force, received the sanction of the Legislature in the reign of Charles II. By these acts, all persons are incapacitated from bearing any office in a corporation, or under the government, who have not previously qualified themselves by receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the usage of the church of England. These acts were made on purpose to exclude Roman Catholics from any offices of trust and importance. The Protestant Dissenters, with a magnanimity of mind, promoted them, though they knew that they would equally exclude them from such offices. But they generously sacrificed their own rights to preserve their country from Popery; and confided in the generosity of parliament to pass some future bill in their favour. No such bill has yet passed: and no sufficient reason can be given why they, who are second to none for their good order and loyalty, should not be intitled to all the privileges and emoluments of government, equally with any other of their fellow-citizens.

Determined upon risking every thing for the sake of the great object of his heart, the introduction of Popery, he published his declaration of indulgence to his subjects of all religions, by which his only intention was to favour the Roman Catholics. This declaration he ordered to be read in the pulpit by all the established clergy. And, when the Archbishop of Canterbury and six other Bishops petitioned against it, as contrary to an express act of parliament, they were for this committed to the Tower.

“ As these venerable men were carried, by water, to their prison, immense crouds of people lined the banks of the Thames. And when they beheld these fathers of the church brought from court under the custody of a guard, when they saw them embarked in vessels on the river, and conveyed towards the Tower, all their affection for liberty, all their zeal for religion, blazed up at once, and, with uncommon agitation, they beheld this affecting and animating spectacle. The whole shore was covered with crouds of prostrate spectators, who at once implored the blessing of those holy pastors, and addressed their petitions towards heaven for protection, during the extreme danger to which their country and their religion stood exposed. Even the soldiers, seized with the contagion of the same spirit, flung themselves on their knees, and craved the benediction of the holy prisoners whom they were appointed to guard. The Bishops themselves, during this triumphant suffering, augmented the general fervor, by the most lowly submissive deportment; and they still exhorted the people to fear God, honor the
King,

King, and maintain their loyalty; expressions more animating than the most inflammatory speeches.”*

When they were brought to their trial, in Westminster-hall, two of the Judges, though they only held their places during pleasure, had the courage to declare against a dispensing power in the crown, as inconsistent with all law; and, if the dispensing power was not legal, it followed, of course, that the Bishops could not be criminal in refusing obedience to an illegal command. Never was there any cause managed with more ability by the counsel on both sides, or listened to with more eager attention. The jury at length withdrew; and, when they brought in their verdict, *Not Guilty!* the populace, who filled Westminster-hall and all Palace-yard, shouted thrice with such vehemence that the sound reached the city. The loudest acclamations were immediately echoed from street to street, bonfires were lighted, and every other demonstration given of public joy. Nor were the rejoicings, on account of this legal victory, confined to the capital: they rapidly spread over the whole kingdom, and found their way even into the camp: for, *James*, in order to over-awe the people, had formed a camp of fifteen thousand men on Hounslow-heath. The King, having reviewed his army on the same morning that the jury gave in their verdict in favour of the Bishops, and having afterward retired into the tent of Lord Feversham, the general, was suddenly alarmed with a great uproar in the camp, attended with the most extravagant expressions of tumultuous joy. He anxiously enquired the cause, and was told, by Feversham, “It was nothing but the rejoicing of the

C

soldiers

* Hume's History.

soldiers for the acquittal of the Bishops." — "And do you call that nothing?" exclaimed James, ready to burst with rage and indignation.*

These were some of the wrongs and grievances under which the nation groaned at the time we are now speaking of. And such violent and repeated infringements of the Constitution could not fail to alarm the whole nation. Grievances, like these, will, I presume, in your estimation, fully vindicate the conduct of your ancestors in the measures which they took to redress them, and to accomplish that glorious Revolution which we commemorate this day. And I trust there is not a person here present, but, had he lived in those days, would have taken an active part in that great concern.

I now proceed to give you,

II. An account of the methods by which, under divine Providence, the Revolution was brought about.

Mary, the eldest daughter of James II. married William, Prince of Orange, in 1677. He had been elected to the office of Stadtholder over the United Provinces in 1672. This Prince, being a firm Protestant and a steady friend to the civil and religious liberties of men, naturally excited the attention of the English to him, as the most likely person, in their present distress, to help them. And Mary, his wife, being the next heir to the crown, it was thought most eligible to invite him over to protect them in the enjoyment of their liberties and religion.

Not

* Hume, Modern Europe, &c.

Not satisfied with a formal invitation, several English noblemen and gentlemen went over to Holland, and in person encouraged the Prince of Orange to attempt their deliverance from Popery and arbitrary power. This request was too flattering to be slighted, and accordingly the Prince made preparations for this important expedition. He set sail from Helvoet-Sluis with a fleet of near five hundred vessels, and an army of above fourteen thousand men; with which he advanced with a fair wind towards the West of England. In his own ship the Prince had a flag with English colours, and his own arms surrounded with these popular words; — **THE PROTESTANT RELIGION, and the LIBERTIES of ENGLAND.**

The same wind, which favoured the Prince, detained the King's fleet in the river, and enabled the Dutch to pass the straits of Dover without molestation; so that the success of the glorious Revolution may be said to have depended upon the winds! The shores of France and England were covered with multitudes of people, who, besides admiring the grandeur of the spectacle, were held in anxious suspense by the prospect of an enterprise the most important, which, during some ages, had been undertaken in Europe.

The Prince had a prosperous voyage, and landed his army at Torbay on the 5th of November, 1688; on the very day when the nation were all engaged in one general joy on account of their deliverance from the Powder-plot about fourscore years before. This circumstance William could not help considering as a happy presage of the success of his expedition.

The nation at large soon declared in favor of William, and the poor, abject, pusillanimous, James, finding his army deserting from him every day, at last made his escape to St. Germain in France, whither the Queen and the Prince of Wales had arrived the day before.* The throne thus being vacant, a convention of the members of the three last parliaments invited William and Mary to fill it. Having accepted this invitation, they were proclaimed King and Queen of Great Britain on the 13th of February, 1688⁹.

Had we been actors upon the stage of life in those days, had we felt the hardships under which our brave ancestors suffered, and had we seen this safe, this bloodless, this complete, deliverance of the Revolution, we should think that enough could never be said on so interesting a subject.

III. The next thing for our consideration was the advantages our forefathers derived from it, and which we, at this day, enjoy.

I. The Revolution places us under the protection of the laws.

How infinitely better is this, to be under the protection of the laws, made by the three estates of the Legislature, than to be under the protection of the best King in the world! Kings are changeable, and may

* Lewis XIV. who was an accomplished gentleman as well as a magnificent king, treated the dethroned monarch, on every occasion, with much tenderness and respect: but some of the French courtiers were less polite than their Sovereign: "There," says one of them in the hearing of James, "is a simpleton, who has lost three kingdoms for a mass!"

may be arbitrary; but it is not in the power of the King of England, however arbitrary his principles, to act contrary to the laws. The Revolution, by pronouncing the dispensing power illegal, has now proved that the King is as much bound to obey the laws as any of his subjects are. "A King of England (to use the words of Lord Bolingbroke) is now, strictly and properly, what a King ought to be; a member, but the supreme member or head, of the body politic, distinct from it, or independent of it, in nothing. He can no longer move in a different order from his people; and, like some superior planet, attract, repel, and direct, their motions by his own. He and they are parts of the same system, intimately joined and co-operating together; acting and acted upon, limiting and limited, controuling and controuled, by one another; and, when he ceases to stand in this relation to them, he ceases to stand in any. The settlements, by virtue of which he governs, are plainly *original contracts*; his institution is plainly *conditional*; and he may forfeit his right to *allegiance*, as undeniably and effectually as the subject his right to *protection*."*

2. The Revolution proves to us that the subject has a right to *resist*, if ever the first magistrate should act contrary to the laws and endeavor to destroy the Constitution. It is only upon this principle the Revolution can be vindicated; for, if the subject, in the circumstances already described, has no right of resistance, it then follows that the promoters of the Revolution were rebels, and William, and all his successors, usurpers. One of the first law-authorities

* Dissertation on Parties, let. ix.

thorities in this kingdom observes, " That the Revolution has confirmed and exemplified the doctrine of resistance, when the executive magistrate endeavors to subvert the Constitution."†

Yet it ought to be well observed, that it is not every rash impetuous spirit that has the right to resist whenever he may fancy the Constitution in danger. The cool, dispassionate, and sober, part of the people at large are to determine, whether their grievances are of so enormous a nature as to require redress, and whether there be a probability of success with little or no mischief; for, it should seem that it is more eligible to bear with some little inconveniences than to plunge the nation into all the horrors of a civil war and the anarchy consequent upon such an event. " They, who concerted the Revolution, (says Mr. Paley,) were justifiable in their counsels; because, from the apparent disposition of the nation, and the strength and character of the parties engaged, the measure was likely to be brought about with little mischief or bloodshed."*

3. The obtaining of the *bill of rights* was the happy effect of the Revolution.

The *declaration of rights* was drawn up by the Lords and Commons; and, before they would offer the Crown to William and Mary, they ordered the Clerk of the Crown to read this declaration before them. In this bill, after enumerating many of their

† Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. iv. p. 440.

" The principles of nature and common-sense do fully authorise resistance to the magistrate in extreme cases; and, of course, justify the Revolution to every candid dispassionate man." Bishop Hurd's Dialogues, vol. ii. p. 85.

* Paley's moral and political Philosophy, 4to. p. 425.

their rights and privileges, they, in a very manly style, *claim, demand, and insist upon, them as their undoubted right.* To which, when they had assented, the Marquis of Halifax, Speaker of the House of Lords, made a solemn tender of the Crown to their Highnesses in the name of both Houses, whereupon they were proclaimed King and Queen of England, &c. on the same day, February 13, 1688⁸/₇.

And, in the *Bill of Rights*, which passed about a twelvemonth after, all these privileges were confirmed and enlarged by parliament.

4. The support of the *Protestant religion* was another consequence of the Revolution.

This was the direct and immediate effect of it; for, William himself being strongly attached to the Protestant religion, he defended it to the utmost, and established it, as the religion of the kingdom, more firmly than it had ever been before: a blessing which we enjoy at this very day.

Another very important circumstance, consequent upon the Revolution, for the support of Protestantism, was the act of settlement which passed in the first year of the reign of William and Mary; by which it was provided, that, after the death of William and Mary, the crown should descend to Anne, Princess of Denmark, the second daughter of James II. and the heirs of her body, being *Protestants*; and great care was taken to secure, from the encroachments of the Sovereign, the most essential rights and privileges of the subject.

It is also worthy of your attention to observe, that, in the last year of the reign of William, the Duke of Gloucester, who was the only surviving child of Anne,

Anne, Princess of Denmark, and who was the last *male heir* of the Protestant line, died. Catholics were excluded from succeeding to the English crown by the former act of settlement; and, the male line of the Protestants being extinct, it now became necessary to proceed to Protestant females; and, by act of parliament, the crown was settled on the Princess Sophia of Hanover, grand daughter of James I. and the heirs general of her body, being Protestants. By this act of settlement it is that our present most gracious Monarch sits upon the throne of these kingdoms. He is indebted for this dignity to the glorious Revolution; and the names of William III. and George III. ought to be ever dear to all true lovers of their country.

5. The increase of *public credit*, to a degree before unheard of, was another of the happy effects of this great event.

It has always been observed, that, in proportion to the freedom which a nation enjoys, in the same proportion the arts, agriculture, manufactures, commerce, public credit, and the power and dignity of a kingdom, prevail. And, in all these respects, there is not a nation upon earth can vie with us.

The Company of the Bank of England, which is an honor to the kingdom, and the astonishment of all Europe, was incorporated by parliament, in the fifth and sixth years of the reign of King William, by the name of "The Governor and Company of the Bank of England." This was the greatest and boldest operation in finance that had ever taken place. This enabled William to borrow money upon those parliamentary securities which are now called the public funds. How well this scheme has answered

answered is known in the present day much better than could have been at that time.

6. *The Act of Toleration* reflects peculiar lustre on the reign of William, and is another of the important advantages we derive from the Revolution.

This act, which passed in the first year of William and Mary, places Protestant Dissenters (upon complying with the conditions of it) under the protection of the laws, in the exercise of their religion, as much as any member of the Church of England can possibly be: and there certainly were much wisdom and sound policy in this act. Are there any better or more loyal subjects in the kingdom than the Protestant Dissenters? Do they not contribute their share and proportion to support the expences of government with as much chearfulness as any of their fellow-citizens? Are they not as rational, as manly, as public-spirited, and as useful, as any description of men whatever? And do they not profess the very same religion of Christ as their brethren of the Church of England? Therefore it is nothing but bare justice that they should receive the fullest protection of the laws. William saw the equity of this reasoning; the Parliament were fully convinced of it; on account of which the act of toleration was passed.*

D

This

* The penal statutes against the Dissenters, previous to the Revolution, were extremely severe, subjecting them, for their non-conformity, to the hardest sufferings, heavy penalties, confiscation of goods, and imprisonments, of which any person may inform himself by reading Neal's History of the Puritans as to their Sufferings, or by consulting Burn's Justice, (under the article *Dissenters*,) as to the punishments they were exposed to.

The

This act has been continued ever since ; and not only so, but the wisdom and justice of the present government have even extended and enlarged the privileges before granted. Protestant Dissenters, complying with the terms of the act, are so much under the protection of the magistrate, that, " should any person, wilfully, maliciously, or contemptuously, disturb any Congregation assembled for divine worship in any meeting-house, or misuse any preacher or teacher there, he shall be bound over to the sessions of the peace, and forfeit twenty pounds."* So that *we* have the strongest reason to commemorate this great event, *the Revolution*, with peculiar joy.

We are now to reflect upon those useful lessons which we may learn from this event.

It appears extremely obvious, from the preceding facts, that there is a God who judgeth in the earth ; according to the words of our text, *God is the judge, he putteth down one and setteth up another*. These words were true as to God's rejection of the house of Saul,

The spirit of moderation, good sense, and Christian charity, which prevailed at the time of the Revolution, produced the toleration-act. That spirit of moderation and Christian charity has, since that period, diffused itself still more extensively ; and the time is now come, when Churchmen and Dissenters agree to lay aside their mutual bigotry, to drop their old prejudices, and to love as brethren. We see now that uniformity of opinion is not necessary any more than uniformity of face and stature ; and we are now convinced that there is no more need that men's understandings should be all of a size than there is that they should be all of the same height, by introducing the bed of Procrustes, by lopping the tall, and stretching the short.

* Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. iv. p. 54.

Saul, and choosing David to sit upon his throne. They are equally verified in the dethronement of James and the exaltation of William. When we so clearly see the traces of divine Providence in directing and influencing the concerns of this lower world, it should afford us the strongest consolation, that, since a Being of infinite wisdom and boundless goodness presides over human affairs, all will be ordered to promote the truest happiness of those who put their trust in him. You see, hence, the reason there is for observing this day with peculiar gratitude. If a Jubilee* was held to celebrate the character of a Shakespeare; if a Commemoration† was observed in honor of Handel: great as these names are, especially the first, whose immortal genius has not only shed a lustre upon this island, but has reflected a dignity upon human nature; yet still the æra of the Revolution ought to be celebrated by us with much greater joy; because all that we hold dear, as Men, as Britons, and as Christians, is inseparably connected with it.

It is a truth equally evident that we ought to do all in our power to preserve these glorious liberties. It is a duty which we owe to ourselves who enjoy them, to our ancestors who transmitted them down, and to our posterity who will claim at our hands this, the best birth-right, and noblest inheritance of mankind. Let us inspire this spirit, and these principles, into the minds of our children. — We are told, in ancient story, that Hamilcar, the old Carthaginian general, made his son Hannibal,

D 2

when

* At Stratford upon Avon.

† In Westminster-abbey.

when a boy of only nine years of age, swear, upon the altars, *eternal enmity to the Romans*. Let us, in imitation of this brave old Carthaginian, make it our study to impress the minds of our children, in their tender age, with the knowledge and love of the natural rights and liberties of mankind, which they have a right to claim and demand: but, instead of following Hamilcar in infusing into their breasts *enmity* to any one, let us inspire them with the sentiments of universal benevolence to all mankind; that they may look upon all men as their brethren, in whatever climate they were born, or whatever religion they profess.

It is this generous spirit, and this love of liberty, which has raised England to that height of glory which it possesses throughout the world. We shall therefore render the most essential services to our country, whilst we bring up our children in the knowledge and love of the principles of the Revolution:

Our lips shall tell them to our sons,
And they again to theirs,
That generations yet unborn
May teach them to their heirs.

WATTS.

Whilst we are filled with joy for the temporal deliverances which we have received from God, let us take care that we are not insensible of the much greater deliverances we enjoy through the gospel of his Son. What is the deliverance of a kingdom in comparison

comparison with the ransom of a world! What are the transitory blessings of time in comparison with those substantial and eternal felicities, which God hath promised to them that love him!

THE END.

(99)

only known in the nation of a world. What are
the many black in comparison with
the spiritual and physical which God
has planned to form that love him

26 JY 66

JUL 12 1866

2

108

